

THE TRUSTEE PROGRAM AND PARK CAVE MANAGEMENT PLAN REFERENCES

Trustees are park-approved individuals who are authorized to lead trips into Soldier's, Crystal and Weisraum Caves.

The Trustees at Soldier's, Weisraum, and Crystal Caves will:

- Lead all trips into the cave
- Carefully select participants on trips while considering a respective cave's very fragile features and dangerous climbdowns and ropework. The Park Service considers Soldier's to be an excellent cave to practice previously learned caving skills including moving through delicate areas, rope descending and ascending, chimneying and low-5th-class climbing. The cave is not an appropriate place to learn these skills. Thus, novice cavers must not enter Soldier's. Crystal and Weisraum are more appropriate for novice cavers.
- Carefully monitor the activities of trip participants while in the cave to insure that they follow all Park rules and restrictions and do not damage the cave in any way.
- Attend annual weekend meetings and training sessions sponsored by the Park for Trustees
- Consult with and make recommendations and suggestions to the Park concerning the management and protection of Soldier's, Crystal and/or Weisraum.
- Complete cave permit forms and seek approval of the permit from the Park in advance of all trips into the cave, and complete trip report forms following all trips into the cave.

The Trustee program is part of the Park Cave Management Plan. Parts of the plan relevant to the Trustee program and the management of Soldier's, Crystal and Weisraum are quoted below.

(from pg. 53 of the Park Cave Management Plan)

3. Park "Trustee" Program

a. The Park Trustee program is a new and evolving idea based upon the long-used, cave-management concept of trip leaders. Trustees will be Park V.I.P.s (Volunteers in Parks) and will be covered by Park liability and worker's compensation insurance. Initially, the caves with trustee programs will be Soldier's and Crystal Sequoia. Separate lists of Park approved and active trustees will be kept for each cave.

Trustees' primary responsibilities will involve the selection of cavers for trips. Trustees must insure that cavers are conservation-minded, cautious around delicate cave features at all times, follow any and all specific restrictions on activities within the cave, have the abilities appropriate for the cave in question (such as vertical proficiency for Lost Soldier's), and are experienced in moving through delicate, physically challenging caves. However, it is the responsibility of cavers interested in visiting these caves to demonstrate these skill and attitudes to a Trustee.

Trustees are expected to be active contributors of ideas for conservation-oriented management of the caves with which they are involved and for other caves in the Park. They can act as a ready source of knowledge and experience for the Park Cave Management Program.

b. The maximum number of Park-approved trustees for a specific cave will be determined by the number of possible trips that can occur during a year, based on other restrictions placed on a cave. (such as a Management Class or a commercial operation)

Limits are placed on the number of Trustees to insure that the trustee programs are 1) not larger than is necessary and will not become an administrative burden on Park staff and 2) so that Trustees will have a level of responsibility which keeps them active in the program. The number of trustees for a particular cave may be changed upon recommendation of the Cave Management Committee and the approval of the Superintendent.

Trustees will be expected to participate in a small, minimum number of trips each year, the number of which will vary with the management of each cave. If people interested in visiting the particular cave are not available for trips which the trustee may lead, the required number of trips may be waived by the Cave Specialist.

Trustees may resign at any time and the Cave Specialist may remove an individual's Trustee status at any time.

c. Application for trusteeship should be sent to the Cave Specialist's Office in letter form and should include the individual's experience with cave conservation (clean-ups, cave-gating, activity with Conservation Task Forces, etc), vertical experience (longest drops, most drops per trip, rigging ability, etc), personal caving experience (numbers of times in Lost Soldier's or Crystal Cave, recent caving trips, long caving trips, etc) other qualifications (N.S.S. membership, Grotto officer, Grotto endorsement, etc) and three references. Trustee applicants should seek positive, honest references from any NSS member or other person active in caving. Whether the person giving the reference has been active in Park cave projects and is known to Park management personal is irrelevant.

Applications for trusteeship will be approved or denied by the Superintendent under recommendation of the Cave Specialist. The Park Cave Management Committee will consider the geographical location of applicants in its recommendations for the approval of trustees to insure that there is an even distribution of trustees across California. If more qualified applicants have applied than the number of positions available, a lottery will be held to determine who becomes a trustee. The lottery's only restriction will be an even geographical distribution.

(from pg. 21 of the Park Cave Management Plan)

5. Class "V" Caves

a) Class V Caves are the most hazardous from a structural standpoint. Their characteristics may include areas of confusing maze-type passages and multiple levels; passages less than 30 centimeters (12 inches) in height or diameter along main routes; vertical drops of more than 15 meters (50 feet) requiring ropes; a risk of flooding or a strong danger of hypothermia for the unprepared due to low cave temperatures and/or strong air flow and/or the presence of water; loose ceiling rocks in small passages and crawlways.

b) The nature of Class V Caves necessitates that all members of an exploration party be experienced cavers, that minimum group size be three, and that all party members practice safe caving, vertical caving and cold-condition caving rules. Appropriate equipment would include a shock absorbent, UIAA approved hard hat with mounted light and at least two other sources of light per person; boots with non-skid soles, possibly insulated; a complete set of vertical ascent and descent gear each, as appropriate; protective clothing, possibly including wet suits, which will provide insulation and which will not become caught or snagged in vertical equipment. Other items, which may be appropriate in Class V Caves include food, water, a first-aid kit, a map of the cave, and a space blanket or garbage bags to help cavers stay warm.

